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Bundy Brothers, McNamara Prove Articulate Advocates Of 'Hard Line' on Viet Nam

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Their Counsel Respected by Johnson,
Who Appears Firmly Committed to
Stiff Policy on Southeast Asia

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AS PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON shapes United States policy in the Viet Nam crisis, two forceful, patrician brothers from Boston, McGeorge and William P. Bundy, are among his most influential advisers.

In the White House inner circle assisting and counseling the President on Viet Nam, few voices are more respected by Mr. Johnson than that of McGeorge Bundy, his special assistant for national security affairs. Foreign policy specialists generally consider Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Bundy the two men closest to the Chief Executive in determining the next moves in Southeast Asia.

William P. Bundy, often referred to in Washington as "the other Bundy," is not as well known as his younger brother, but he is rated as a fast-rising personality in foreign policy. His transfer a year ago from the Defense Department to the key post of Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs was viewed as strengthening McNamara's influence in foreign relations.

All three men—McNamara and the Bundy brothers—are persuasive and articulate advocates of a "hard line" in the Viet Nam crisis. This policy, to which the President now appears committed, insists that there can be no negotiations with Communist North Viet Nam until Hanoi withdraws the Viet Cong insurgents from South Viet Nam. An essential ingredient of the hard line is the selective bombing of strategic targets in North Viet Nam in an effort to force withdrawal of the guerrillas.

The prominence of McNamara and the two Bundys in the Viet Nam policy deliberations has given rise to an impression that the spectrum of opinion reaching the President is being constantly narrowed. In this view, Mr. Johnson is receiving largely one-sided advice, rather than a range of alternatives.

IT IS TRUE, as McGeorge Bundy is known to state privately, that the President can and does read the Senate speeches calling for negotiation, and he is aware of the major alternatives. But those who believe that the advice reaching him has been too homogeneous believe that more subtle approaches are being given insufficient attention. They cite the possibility of South Viet Nam counter-insurgency warfare rather than a formal military effort with its risk of escalation, and the alternative of secret negotiations accompanying the aerial strikes.

The emergence of the Bundy brothers as key advisers on Viet Nam has created an impression also that former Secretary of State Dean Acheson is wielding considerable quiet influence as a sort of gray eminence on Viet Nam. This view considers the hard line of the Bundys as a contemporary version of the containment policy with which Acheson was identified in the Truman administration.

McNamara and the Bundy brothers argue that containment today must block not only Communism's conventional and nuclear force but the infiltration and subversion tactics of so-called "wars of national liberation." Other foreign policy authorities believe that an effort to contain all of these shadowy and elusive movements, which often resemble local civil wars as much as Communist thrusts, could seriously overextend the United States.

THE BUNDY BROTHERS have known Acheson since their childhood, when he was a frequent guest at the Bundy home on Beacon street in Boston. Although McGeorge Bundy

Republican, he edited "Patterns of Responsibility," a collection of Acheson's public papers that presented the former Secretary's record in a favorable light at a time when he was under attack by the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. William Bundy, a Democrat, is married to one of Acheson's daughters.

The late Judge Learned Hand once called McGeorge Bundy "the brightest man in America." Prof. Charles R. Cherington of Harvard university has said of him: "I have great admiration for Mac Bundy, but I don't like him personally. He pays no attention to what the other fellow may think. He is as cold as ice."

These two views sum up much of the prevailing opinion in Washington about the special assistant for national security affairs. His brilliance is widely acknowledged, and so, for the most part, is his arrogance. Both his friends and his critics say that he is tough, competitive, extremely self-confident, energetic and ambitious. His critics add another adjective: rude.

He is a wiry, lean man of five feet, 10 inches, and is credited with a keenly analytical mind, an immense capacity for work and an unusual propensity for antagonizing people. He has been known to break off a conversation with the curt and cold remark that the discussion was boring him.

LIKE HIS BROTHER, William Bundy is considered to have a first-rate mind and a prodigious appetite for work. Occasionally, but less often than his brother, he displays an overbearing manner, looking down superciliously from his six-foot, four-inch height. In public, he tends to be stiff and somewhat pompous, sprinkling his conversation with phrases like "quantum jump," but privately his associates like and respect him.

The brothers have an aristocratic background of privilege, intellectualism and

public service. Among their ancestors were Amy Lowell, the poet; James Russell Lowell, poet, critic and diplomat, and Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam of Bunker Hill fame. Their father, Harvey H. Bundy, a lawyer who died in 1933, was an Assistant Secretary of State in the Hoover administration and in World War II was a special assistant to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. Their mother was a niece of A. Lawrence Lowell, president of Harvard.

"Bill" Bundy, now 47 years old, and "Mac" Bundy, 45, attended Groton School and Yale University. The older brother received an A.B. degree from Yale in 1939, an M.A. from Harvard in 1940 and an LL.B. from Harvard in 1947. McGeorge Bundy received an A.B. from Yale in 1940, majoring in mathematics and classics.

A legend at Yale relates that McGeorge Bundy once wrote on an examination paper: "Your questions are silly. If I were giving this test, these are the questions I would ask, and these are my answers." The story goes that the professor was impressed by this boldness and gave Bundy a high mark on the questions that Bundy had asked himself and answered.

ALTHOUGH he has only one academic degree, McGeorge Bundy became professor of government and dean of the arts and sciences faculty at Harvard.

The late President John F. Kennedy brought Bundy into his Administration as the key White House assistant on foreign policy and head of the National Security Council's professional staff. The Bundy operation has been called a "little State Department," and some observers have credited him with being the real Secretary of State. Bundy is understood to deny this emphatically, saying that Dean Rusk is Secretary in fact as well as name.

Nevertheless, the impression carries great weight with President Johnson.